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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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BRIEFING MEMORANDUM Schmoker 7/2/85

S/S February 07, 1981

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TO: The Secretary

FROM: T - Mr. Buckley ✓ in part

SUBJECT: Status of Saudi F-15's and NSC Meeting, 4:00 p.m. Today

As I noted in my earlier memorandum, the prevalent opinion among members of the two committees yesterday was that we should give them some more time to express views to us; particular concern was expressed on behalf of members of the committees who could not be present yesterday.

Under the circumstances I believe it would be wise to allow a few more days before ending this "preliminary" consultation.

In the meantime, we cannot delay having John West convey our proposals to the Saudi Government and to receive Saudi reactions prior to going further. Ambassador West hopes to be able to see Crown Prince Fahd tomorrow evening in Riyadh. (He will do his best to see DefMin Sultan in the next few days who is at present in the desert with the King.) We have discussed the situation with West on the secure phone and he is comfortable with our modified approach.

There are attached revised draft messages to the Saudi leaders from you and Cap Weinberger which reflect the current situation. Assuming early confirmation from West of Saudi positive initial reaction to our proposals, we would be in a position early next week to make the final decisions and also to decide on the timing of initiating the required Congressional review process.

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As you know, Fred Ikle and DOD staff members participated in our consultations on the Hill yesterday and a member of Fred's staff is a permanent member of my working group, which met this morning to review the situation. DOD is informed of where we are and why. We will do our best to obtain formal SecDef concurrence on the revised letter from Weinburger before the NSC meeting. To be on the safe side, you might raise the subject with Cap just prior to the meeting.

Attachments:

Tab 1 - Draft messages.

Tab 2 - Talking points for NSC.

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TALKING POINTS

-- JIM BUCKLEY MET THURSDAY AFTERNOON WITH THE HOUSE AND SENATE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEES. RESULTS WERE NOT CONCLUSIVE AND MOST MEMBERS TOOK EITHER PREDICTABLE OR NONCOMMITTAL POSITIONS.

-- THESE KEY POINTS EMERGED:

  -- ANY INDICATION OF AN ACCOMMODATION WITH ISRAEL OVER THE PACKAGE WITH LESS VOCAL ISRAELI OPPOSITION COULD BE DECISIVE IN SWINGING CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT TO US.

  -- SEVERAL MEMBERS URGED THAT WE GET SOMETHING TANGIBLE FROM THE SAUDIS IN RETURN FOR THIS FURTHER SHOW OF OUR SUPPORT FOR THEM.

  -- WE WERE URGED BY SENATE DEMOCRATS TO GIVE MORE TIME FOR CONSULTATIONS ALTHOUGH THEY JOINED THE REPUBLICANS IN EXPRESSING APPRECIATION FOR THIS FIRST REAL EFFORT TO CONSULT THE CONGRESS ON A MAJOR DECISION. JIM EMPHASIZED THE NEED TO MOVE AHEAD BEFORE THE PRESS THOROUGHLY CONFUSED THE ISSUES.

  -- MOST MEMBERS SEEMED SATISFIED THAT THE DRAMATIC EVENTS IN THE AREA SINCE 1978 AND THE INCREASED SOVIET THREAT OVERRODE THE COMMITMENTS OF THE PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION RE F-15 ENHANCEMENT.

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-- IN THE DAYS AHEAD WE PLAN THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS:

WITH THE CONGRESS:

-- A SERIES OF VISITS BY THREE STATE AND DOD TEAMS TO SELECTED MEMBERS NEXT WEEK.

-- A DIA BRIEFING ON THE SOVIET THREAT TO THE REGION FOR MEMBERS OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEES IN BOTH HOUSES.

-- INITIATING THE 20-DAY INFORMAL NOTIFICATION PERIOD SOMETIME WITHIN THE NEXT TWO WEEKS. WE WOULD FOLLOW WITH THE 30-DAY FORMAL NOTIFICATION PERIOD IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE EASTER RECESS. WE MIGHT WISH TO PRESS FOR AN EARLY RESOLUTION AND VOTE DURING THAT SECOND PERIOD.

WITH THE SAUDIS:

-- A CABLE CONVEYING LETTERS FROM SECRETARY WEINBERGER AND ME TO THE SAUDIS WILL GO OUT TONIGHT WITH JOHN WEST SEEKING APPOINTMENTS BEGINNING SATURDAY.

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-- I WILL FOLLOW UP WITH MY VISIT IN APRIL AND WE WOULD SEEK TO HAVE GENERAL JONES CARRY THE PROCESS FORWARD DURING A VISIT SHORTLY THEREAFTER.

WITH THE PRESS:

-- WE ARE CONSIDERING A PRESS BACKGROUNDER NEXT WEEK TO OUTLINE OUR STRATEGIC THINKING BEHIND OUR PROPOSALS AND TO CLEAR UP ANY PUBLIC CONFUSION THAT MAY SURROUND THOSE PROPOSALS.

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